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## **Content Validation of Statements Describing the Essential Work of Australian Special Education Teachers**

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*Abstract: This article describes the procedures used in developing and validating a set of statements for Australian special education teachers. Using the existing AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at the proficient level as a basis, a set of statements describing the specific skills and knowledge required by Australian educators working in special education and inclusive settings was prepared. Two groups of subject matter experts reviewed, revised and rated the relevance of the complete set of 49 statements. According to the experts' ratings the content validity of each statement and the corresponding standard met Polit et al.'s (2007) criteria for excellence.*

Keywords – special education teachers, teacher professional standards, special educators

### **Introduction**

In an endeavour to make explicit the knowledge and skills that define effective teaching and thus improve educational outcomes for all students, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership [AITSL] developed the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2014a). Although the introduction of professional standards for Australian regular classroom teachers has greatly assisted in the professionalisation of teaching in this country the lack of standards relevant to specialist teaching positions is becoming problematic. In one of these specialist areas, special education, the absence of specific professional standards causes problems in a lack of clear training pathways and a lack of training consistency across institutions (Forbes, 2007), as well as uncertainty for employers who are unsure whether new staff may be adequately prepared for their work. While stakeholders such as Stephenson and Carter (2014) have lobbied for the development of agreed undergraduate and postgraduate pathways for recognised special education teaching qualifications, there has been little progress in developing specialist professional standards for Australian special education teachers. In contrast, professional standards for special education teachers have been in place in the US and in the UK for well over a decade (Council for Exceptional Children, 2013; The National Archives, UK, 2013).

Despite the current Australian inertia in this area, there are reasonable prospects for the development of professional standards for Australian special education teachers in the medium term. Dempsey and Dally (2014) reviewed such standards in the UK and the US, as well as reviewing the Australian conceptual and empirical literature. They concluded that much of the early groundwork has been done in identifying important skillsets for Australian

special educators and that this may serve to guide the next steps in the Australian validation process.

Validation refers to “the process of gathering, evaluating, and summarizing evidence to support the use of an assessment instrument for its intended purposes” (Sireci & Padilla, 2014, p. 97). The validation of professional standards for teachers is typically a lengthy process that incorporates a number of different validation processes and engages with a variety of relevant stakeholders (e.g., teachers, teacher educators, parent representatives, administrators, unions, and employing bodies). With regard to validation processes, the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (American Educational Research Association [AERA], American Psychological Association, & National Council on Measurement in Education, 1999) note that there are five sources of evidence for validity: content, response processes, internal structure, relations to other variables, and testing consequences. Accordingly, validation of new measures necessarily involves multiple steps that converge on agreement before researchers can confidently assert that a new measure is indeed a valid measure. In this paper we focus on one important validation process, content validation, in the development of statements describing the essential work of Australian special educators. A brief discussion of content validity follows.

Content validity is the degree to which the content of a measure is congruent with the purpose of that measure (Delgado-Rico, Carretero-Dios, & Ruch, 2012). In a helpful discussion, Sireci and Faulkner-Bond (2014) noted that while content validity comprises the elements of domain definition, domain representation, domain relevance, and appropriateness of test construction procedures, all of these issues may be simultaneously addressed via the universally accepted use of subject matter experts (SMEs) in gathering feedback on the measure. SMEs typically rate the degree to which the items are relevant to the intended domain, and traditional content validation studies employ a range of metrics (e.g., consistency and consensus estimates) to assess the reliability of SME ratings (see Polit, Beck & Owen, 2007, p. 461, for an overview of these alternatives).

Our goal in this paper was to complete the early essential task of conducting content validation of a set of skills that are regarded as essential for Australian special education teachers. The purpose of this activity was to assist relevant professional groups (e.g., Australasian Association of Special Education and AITSL) in the necessarily more multifaceted task of developing professional standards for Australian special education teachers. It should be noted that the skills and knowledge comprised in the newly devised standards were designed to be appropriate for teachers in either special education or inclusive education settings and relevant for meeting the learning needs of students accessing either specialised or general curricula. The standards do not encompass the more specialised knowledge and skills that may be required by teachers of students with sensory disabilities.

## Method

The following procedures are consistent with the approach to obtaining content validity evidence recommended by Delgado-Rico, Carretero-Dios and Ruch (2012). These authors suggest a conceptual definition of the construct, item construction, and then expert evaluation of those items. To achieve this, we followed a two-step procedure in developing a set of statements reflecting the essential work of Australian special education teachers. First, we conducted a face validation process to develop a set of draft professional statements based on the existing AITSL (2014a) Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (hereafter referred to as the Standards) and the conceptual analysis of special education professional standards undertaken by Dempsey and Dally (2014). This initial set of draft statements was

reviewed by three SMEs and the statements were subsequently modified to reflect any common concerns, omissions or suggestions. In the second phase, a content validation process was conducted with a larger group of seven Australian SMEs using the revised set of draft statements. Both phases of the research were approved by the University of Newcastle Human Research Ethics Committee (H-2013-0432).

## Phase 1

There are seven national professional standards comprising 37 statements which outline what all Australian teachers should know and be able to do in order to facilitate optimal educational outcomes for their students. The standards are divided into three domains of teaching: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice, and Professional Engagement. Professional Knowledge is comprised of two standards, 1) Know students and how they learn, and 2) Know the content and how to teach it. The Professional Practice domain comprises Standard 3) Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning; Standard 4) Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments; and Standard 5) Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning. The final two standards covered in Professional Engagement are Standard 6) Engage in professional learning and Standard 7) Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community. Within each standard, a number of focus areas provide further illustration of teaching knowledge, practice and professional engagement and for each focus area, descriptor statements are provided for 4 professional career stages of Graduate, Proficient, Highly Accomplished and Lead. The career stage that was the focus of the present attempt to define and validate professional statements for special education teachers was the 'Proficient' level. At the Proficient level teachers "...meet the requirements for full registration through demonstrating achievement of the seven standards at this level." (AITSL, 2014b).

Based on our previous review of special education teacher professional standards in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) and the synthesis of the professional skills of special education teachers reported in published Australian studies (Dempsey & Dally, 2014), the statements pertaining to the proficient level of the Standards were revised, modified and added to with reference to the key elements and focus areas of the Council for Exceptional Children Initial Level Special Educator Preparation Standards (CEC, 2012), as well as current legislation governing the design and delivery of special education services to students with additional needs in Australian schools. The referenced Australian documents included the *Disability Standards for Education* (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2005), the *Review of Disability Standards for Education 2005 Discussion Paper* (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR, 2010), the *Report on the Review of Disability Standards for Education 2005* (DEEWR, 2012) and the thematic overview of recent literature on *Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting in Special Educational Needs and Disability* prepared for the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA, 2011).

This process of cross-referencing and review led to the retention, modification or addition of focus area statements and resulted in a set of 49 draft statements under the 7 AITSL standards (2014) describing the specific knowledge, skills and practices required by special education teachers. From the original 37 AITSL statements, 8 statements were retained without modification and the remaining 29 statements were modified. A further 12 statements were created and added. Because we envisage that the new set of standards will replace rather than supplement the current standards for teachers at the proficient stage with a special or inclusive education qualification, we retained in their original form eight AITSL

statements that addressed the kinds of foundational skills and knowledge that are applicable to the work of all teachers. Three of the eight statements that were retained without modification referred to responsive teaching strategies for indigenous students and those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, two statements concerned the use of information and communication technology, one statement referred to student well-being and safety and the remaining two items addressed teacher professional development. This initial list of statements and the justifications for adding and modifying statements are available from the authors on request. Typically the modifications and additions ensured that the specific roles of the special educator were included and described using language consistent with the Disability Standards and a strengths-based and collaborative approach to supporting student learning. For example, In Standard 1, under Focus area 1.5: the original statement, *Develop teaching activities that incorporate differentiated strategies to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities* was modified to *Use individualised instruction, based on student data and consultation with relevant key players, to develop the capacities, interests and needs of students*. One example of an addition is a statement that was created in order to address Part 5 of the Disability Standards for Education (2005) which relates to “Participation” and indicates the need for reviewing educational programs and ensuring that students are supported to access curriculum content using any necessary adjustments. A new focus area, *Accessible instructional material*, was created along with the descriptive statement: *Review programs and teaching practices and make adjustments, where necessary, to ensure that learning activities and content are accessible and appropriate for students with additional needs*.

The draft set of 49 statements was then provided to three SMEs for general comment, suggestions for revisions and to check for omission of content. The experts were known to the researchers and were selected on the basis of their extensive experience in special education and knowledge of the role of special education teachers. The experts were invited to participate via their publicly available email addresses. Two of the experts were male and one was female. One expert was a university academic with experience in pre-service training for special education teachers, one was a former school principal and special education administrator in the public school sector and one was a senior special education administrator from the non-government school sector. All three experts agreed to review the statements and provided feedback on the adequacy of the statements as well as some suggestions for revisions. Based on the feedback, some minor wording modifications were made to 19 statements and a revised set of draft statements was prepared for Phase 2. The set of revised draft statements, along with indicators of whether the statements are original, modified or added, are provided in the Appendix.

## Phase 2

The revised draft statements were then distributed to 10 SMEs (five male and five female) who were asked to rate the relevance of each statement to the work of Australian special education teachers at the proficient level on a four-point Likert scale. The response options were, *irrelevant*, *low relevance*, *moderate relevance* and *highly relevant*. As in Phase 1, the SMEs had extensive practical and/or academic experience in the field of special education and knowledge of the role of special education teachers. Seven SMEs agreed to participate in this phase. However, according to Polit et al. (2007, p. 466), only a small number of experts (minimum of three to five) are needed to evaluate the relevance of a revised set of scale items. The group of SMEs in Phase 2 were from four Australian states or territories and comprised five males and two females. The gender imbalance in both phases of this study is a

potential limitation to providing a representative view, given that special education is an area currently dominated by female teachers (Rice & Goessling, 2005).

As well as rating the relevance of each statement, the SMEs were asked to identify any essential skills or knowledge for Australian special education teachers that were not captured in the statements. In addition, the participants were asked to provide feedback about any statements that they had rated as irrelevant or of low relevance, and participants were also invited to suggest any revisions for statements they had rated as moderately or highly relevant.

## Data Analysis

The ratings of relevance from the SMEs in Phase 2 were used to evaluate the content validity of each of the 49 statements as well as the validity of the set of statements within each of the seven standards. Content validity refers to the degree to which a scale contains an appropriate set of items to adequately represent the content of the construct under examination (Haynes, Richard, & Kubany, 1995). A widely used method of quantifying content validity for multi-item scales is the content validity index (CVI), which is based on expert ratings of relevance. As recommended by Polit et al. (2007), two measures were used to evaluate the content validity of the revised set of statements. A CVI was computed for each statement (or item) within a Standard. This value is referred to as the I-CVI (Item-CVI). An overall CVI was also calculated for all of the statements in each of the 7 standards. This value is known as the S-CVI (Scale-CVI).

The I-CVI represents the proportion of experts in agreement about the relevance of an individual statement. The I-CVI is computed by dividing the number of experts giving a rating of 3 or 4 (i.e., judging the statement to be moderately or highly relevant) by the total number of experts. There has been debate about the guidelines for determining acceptable values of I-CVI. According to Lynn (1986), if there are fewer than five experts, the I-CVI must be 1.00 (i.e., all experts must agree that the item is content valid). However, when there are more than five experts there can be a modest amount of disagreement. In order to quantify what level of agreement among experts is statistically acceptable a modified kappa statistic can be computed (Polit et al., 2007). The modified kappa adjusts each I-CVI for chance agreement that an item is judged as relevant by the experts. Polit et al. provide a criterion that can be used by scale developers to determine whether their I-CVIs can be classified as fair, good or excellent, depending on the number of experts and the levels of agreement (2007, p.465). According to this method of evaluation, when there are seven experts, I-CVIs of .71 (5 out of 7 experts give ratings of 3 or 4) are considered good, and I-CVIs of .86 (6 out of 7 experts give ratings of 3 or 4) or 1.00 (all experts give high ratings) are considered excellent.

The S-CVI can be calculated by two methods, the universal agreement or averaging method. The universal agreement (UA) approach defines the S-CVI/UA as the proportion of items that achieved a rating of 3 or 4 by all experts. The averaging approach, S-CVI/Ave, uses the I-CVIs for each item to calculate the average I-CVI across all items. Polit et al. (2007) recommend use of the S-CVI/Ave because it avoids the risk of chance disagreements. In the current study, the I-CVI for each statement was computed and the S-CVI/Ave method was used for each Standard. The criteria employed were those recommended by Polit et al. (2007, p.467) who concluded that for a scale to be judged as having excellent content validity, the I-CVIs should be .78 or higher and the S-CVI/Ave .90 or higher.

## Results

In Table 1 we report the I-CVI for each of the 49 statements and the S-CVI/Ave for each of the seven standards. For 17 of the 49 statements the I-CVI was .86, indicating that six of the seven experts agreed that these statements were moderately or highly relevant. For the remaining 32 statements, the I-CVI in every case was 1, indicating that there was unanimous agreement among the experts about the relevance of these statements. The Item-CVIs meet Polit et al.'s (2007) criteria for excellence. The Scale-CVI/Ave for each of the seven standards ranged from .91 to 1, again meeting the criteria for excellent content validity.

The standards with the lowest average scale content validity index were Standard 7- Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community, and Standard 5 - Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning (S-CVI/Ave = .91 and .92 respectively). In Standard 7, one SME gave low ratings (1 or 2) to four statements. Two of the statements that this expert felt had little to no relevance described the teacher's role in promoting recognition and acceptance of disability within the school community (7.1) and advocating to ensure that schools comply with legislative and administrative requirements relating to the education of students with additional needs (7.2). The other two statements given a low rating in Standard 7 referred to establishing respectful relationships with parents and carers (7.4) and building the capacity of parents/carers and colleagues (7.5). While this expert did not provide any comments about the reasons for the low ratings for these particular statements, an observation was made with regard to the domain of "Professional Engagement" that "access to accredited post-graduate qualifications in special education and/or inclusion" should be added to this domain.

One SME also gave low ratings to four of the seven statements in Standard 5. These statements concerned the teachers' role in recording student progress (5.5), collaborating with colleagues to compile assessments (5.5), using student data to evaluate student progress and modify teaching practice or learning goals (5.6) and using records to report to parents/carers and learning support teams (5.7). The expert said they were "not certain about the whole of Standard 5" and commented that the statements in Standard 5 could be used by schools or policy-makers to "stipulate another layer of compliance-heavy documentation" for special educators.

	<i>I-CVI</i>	<i>S-CVI/Ave</i>		<i>I-CVI</i>	<i>S-CVI/Ave</i>
Standard 1		.99	Standard 4		.95
1.1	1		4.1	1	
1.2	1		4.2	1	
1.3	1		4.3	1	
1.4	1		4.4	1	
1.5	1		4.5	.86	
1.6	1		4.6	.86	
1.7	1				.92
1.8	1		Standard 5		
1.9	1		5.1	1	
1.10	.86		5.2	1	
			5.3	.86	
Standard 2		1	5.4	1	
2.1	1		5.5	.86	
2.2	1		5.6	.86	
2.3	1		5.7	.86	
2.4	1				
2.5	1		Standard 6		
2.6	1		6.1	.86	

			6.2	1	.97
Standard 3		.93	6.3	1	
3.1	.86		6.4	1	
3.2	.86				
3.3	.86		Standard 7		.91
3.4	.86		7.1	.86	
3.5	1		7.2	.86	
3.6	1		7.3	1	
3.7	1		7.4	.86	
3.8	.86		7.5	.86	
3.9	1		7.6	1	
3.10	1				

Table 1. I-CVI for each of the 49 statements and S-CVI/Ave for each of the seven standards

The standard with the highest level of agreement was Standard 2- *Know the content and how to teach it*, followed by Standard 1- *Know students and how they learn* (S-CVI/Ave = 1 and .99, respectively). The S-CVI/Ave of 1 for Standard 2 indicated that all SMEs rated all of the statements as relevant or highly relevant. In Standard 1, the only statement where one expert dissented from the majority view was 1.10 concerning the use of augmentative and alternate communication (AAC) systems. SME 7 commented that the phrase “where necessary” could be added to this statement and also to standard 1.5 which described the use of ‘individualised instruction’. This SME did not regard individualised instruction as ‘a good in itself’ and therefore wanted to qualify the use of this approach. Two statements referring to ‘individualised education plans’ (3.1) and ‘individualised goals’ (5.3) were also rated as having low relevance by a different SME. A number of constructive comments were provided by the experts. These included a perception from SME 6, that there was some ‘doubling up’ between the statements, for example 1.5 (individualised instruction to meet student needs and capacities) and 1.1 (flexible and effective teaching strategies to meet student needs, capacities and interests). SME 3 noted that active student involvement was mentioned in relation to transition planning in statement 3.9 but suggested that because this aspect is so crucial it should also be included in Standard 4. SME 5 argued that the capacity to conduct action research projects to evaluate the impact of new strategies and share the results with colleagues in the special education community should be included as an essential statement.

A number of commendatory comments were also received along with a suggestion to improve the validation process. SME 2 commended the “comprehensive document that will assist greatly in the accreditation of special education teachers” and SME 5 noted that the special education focused skills covered “crucial ground” and was hopeful the application of the standards would bear “fruit within our systems in the near future”. SME 7 lamented that it was difficult to ‘spread the ratings’ because when the standards were presented in a decontextualized way every statement appeared “highly relevant.” Finally, SME 6 suggested that the use of the term ‘relevance’ was not appropriate to determine the validity of the statements, and that terms such as ‘required’ or ‘necessary’ may have yielded a greater range of responses.



## Discussion

The purpose of the research reported here was to assist future national efforts in the multifaceted process of validation of professional standards for Australian special education teachers. The lack of such standards in this country continues to lead to uncertainty about accreditation of special education teachers and leads to a lack of consistency in training for those teachers. The focus of the current research was the content validation of statements describing the work of Australian special education teachers at the proficient level. In this regard, a two-phase process with two groups of SMEs using the CVI protocol described by Polit et al. (2007) led to an excellent level of agreement about the relevance of the statements across these experts.

Some authors have argued that there are limitations to the traditional approach to establishing content validity that was used in this research. For example, Sireci (1998) suggested that social desirability may prompt experts to provide medium to high ratings when judging items. However, the best defence to this perceived deficiency is to make a rigorous and representative selection of SMEs to ensure that items are thoroughly assessed (Rubio, Berg-Weger, Tebb, Lee, & Rauch, 2003). In the current study, the rigour of the selection of appropriate experts can be assumed since the experts were either senior special education administrators in the public or Catholic school systems or were special education academics with both a publication record in the area of training for special education teachers and with experience in delivering undergraduate or postgraduate special education teacher programs. The majority of the SMEs also had extensive professional experience as special education teachers. However, given that 7 of the 10 experts were male, the representativeness of the sample was likely to have been compromised by this gender imbalance.

Although there was near universal numerical agreement among the SMEs about the relevance of the statements, some comments made by the experts deserve examination. Firstly, with regard to Standard 7 and the statements concerning the teacher's role in promoting the inclusion of students with a disability in the school community and advocating to ensure that schools comply with legislative requirements, it should be noted that these two statements were specifically included to address one of the key objectives of the Disability Standards for Education (2005), that is, *Promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community* (Disability Standards for Education, 2005, Part 1.3). The other focus of minor dissent in Standard 7 was in relation to building capacity and working collaboratively with parents. Given that parental involvement in the education of a child with special needs is internationally endorsed as 'best practice' (see Dempsey & Dally, 2014) and that this aspect is also mandated in the Disability Standards, we would concur with the majority of the SMEs who rated these features as relevant to the role of special educators.

Second, three of the SMEs noted that some of the specific skills and teaching practices (e.g. AAC) were not applicable to all students, leading to concerns that the statements could be used as an overly prescriptive evaluation mechanism to hold practising teachers accountable for completing a raft of time-consuming paper-work that may not be needed in their current context. We acknowledge that there is a diverse array of additional learning needs that special educators will encounter and we recognise that not every skill captured in the 49 statements will need to be demonstrated in every teaching situation. Rather than trying to contextualise the application of the standards or qualify some practices by adding the phrase "where necessary", we sought to compile a set of key competencies that every special education teacher at the proficient stage of their career should have in their repertoire. The standards should be viewed as a compilation of the essential skills and

knowledge that special educators need to equip them to work in a range of settings and with a range of disabilities and learning needs.

Third, the use of the term ‘individualised instruction’ in Standard 1.5 attracted some comment as it seemed to be interpreted as ‘individual instruction’ or the use of one-to-one teaching methods. The intent behind this statement was to capture instruction that was designed to be ‘specific to the individual.’ As noted in the elaborations of the CEC Initial Level Special Educator Preparation Standards, the “raison d’être for special education lies in the specialised professional knowledge and skills to *individualise* access to learning ... for individuals with exceptionalities” (p. 2). The CEC also notes that the term individualise can be used synonymously with terms such as ‘personalise’ and ‘customised’. It would seem prudent to revise Standard 1.5 and replace ‘individualised instruction’ with ‘personalised learning’ to make the implications of this standard clearer and to align the standard with current Australian state and federal policies which recommend that teachers should address the personalised learning needs of students with a disability. The Australian Curriculum describes how teachers can ‘personalise learning’ by adjusting the focus of a particular lesson to incorporate a student’s individual goals in a whole class activity, while in NSW teachers are obliged to report to parents of a child with additional needs on their child’s progress in relation to syllabus outcomes that have been adjusted to meet the student’s ‘personalised learning needs’ (NSW DET, 2006, p.4). Although there was some disagreement about the relevance of the statements referring to ‘individualised education plans’ and ‘individualised goals’, we would contend that these statements and the use of the word ‘individualised’ be retained without modification. The Review of the 2005 Disability Standards (DEEWR, 2012, p.viii) recommended that a revised set of Disability Standards should include a requirement for schools to develop ‘individual education plans’ that include advice on barriers faced by students with disability and how these barriers can be overcome.

Finally, the suggestion to include a statement in Standard 6 that captures a teacher’s capacity to conduct action research projects has some merit, given the inclusion of practitioner research at several levels of the Australian Qualifications Framework (2014). Further support for this proposal can be found in a recent report compiled by the OECD (2011, p. 237) which identified research skills training as one of the characteristics of teacher-education programs in the five top-performing countries according to the 2009 results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

## Conclusion

The current article has described the process of developing a set of professional statements for Australian special education teachers that are closely aligned with existing AITSL standards at the proficient level. The analysis of the ratings of relevance provided by a small group of subject matter experts indicated that the standards and corresponding statements meet the criteria for excellent content validity. Delgado-Rico, Carretero-Dios, and Ruch (2012) note that “content validity evidence not only helps conceptually define the construct of interest but also lays the basis for a correct explanation of the variance in the scores obtained” (p. 451). While these authors’ comments relate to content validity for the purpose of developing valid and reliable instruments of measurement, they also have relevance to the goal of validating professional standards for special education teachers. Logical next steps in a more holistic validation of the 49 statements developed in this research include at least two further procedures. First, the extent to which these statements are associated with other measures that are conceptually related needs to be established. One measure that may be hypothesised to be conceptually and statistically associated with teacher professional

standards for special educators is the construct of teacher self-efficacy. Teacher self-efficacy has been found to influence student achievement and motivation and teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to persist in teaching students with difficulties, set more ambitious goals for these students, and support the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Kelm & McIntosh, 2012). Second, it will be advantageous to examine the internal consistency reliability of each set of statements using confirmatory factor analysis procedures. The refinement and further validation of these newly developed statements will provide a reliable instrument defining a core set of skills and knowledge that captures the essential work of proficient special educators.

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## Appendix

### Statements used to describe the work of Australian special education teachers at the proficient level in Phase 2 of the study

*Note:*

- (A) -Added a newly created statement
- (M) – Modified an existing statement
- (O) – Original statement retained

#### Standard 1 – Know students and how they learn

- 1.1 (M) Select and use a flexible and effective repertoire of teaching strategies to meet the needs, capacities and interests of individual students.
- 1.2 (M) Structure teaching programs using relevant student data, evidence-based practice and reflective practice about how individual students learn.
- 1.3 (O) Design and implement teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse socioeconomic, linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds.
- 1.4 (O) Design and implement effective teaching strategies that are responsive to the local community and cultural setting, linguistic background and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- 1.5 (M) Use individualised instruction, based on student data and consultation with relevant key players, to address areas of need and develop the learning capacities of students.
- 1.6 (A) Modify instructional materials to ensure they are in a format that is suitable and accessible for the student.
- 1.7 (A) Review programs and teaching practices and make adjustments where necessary to ensure that learning activities and content are accessible and appropriate for students with additional needs.
- 1.8 (M) Design and implement teaching activities that support students' social inclusion and learning in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and associated Disability Standards for Education (2005).
- 1.9 (A) Develop reasonable activity substitutes in cases where a student is unable to participate in class or extra-curricular environments.
- 1.10 (A) Understand a range of augmentative and alternative communications systems and use those systems to enhance students' language development and communication skills.

#### Standard 2 – Know the content and how to teach it

- 2.1 (M) Develop scaffolded learning activities to promote the acquisition and generalisation of knowledge and skills.
- 2.2 (M) Select and organise content into core and additional knowledge.
- 2.3 (M) Utilise regular, modified and alternative curriculum that addresses the specific needs of individual students.
- 2.4 (O) Provide opportunities for students to develop understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.
- 2.5 (M) Provide explicit instruction to address specific areas of difficulty in literacy and numeracy skills.
- 2.6 (M) Use effective assistive technologies to enhance student participation and learning.

**Standard 3 – Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning**

- 3.1 (M) Set challenging and achievable short and long-term goals that are an integral part of an individualised education plan.
- 3.2 (M) Develop functional academic and social goals that promote learning related behaviours.
- 3.3 (M) Plan and implement clearly structured and sequenced teaching activities that scaffold learning for individual students.
- 3.4 (M) Use a variety of evidence-based teaching strategies that build students' cognitive and metacognitive skills.
- 3.5 (O) Select and/or create and use a range of resources, including ICT, to engage students in their learning.
- 3.6 (M) Use and teach a range of mainstream, augmentative and alternative communication strategies to promote student interactions, engagement and learning.
- 3.7 (M) Use student data and critical reflection to regularly evaluate all components of the teaching cycle for individual students.
- 3.8 (M) Provide formal and informal opportunities for parents/carers to be involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of their child's learning plan.
- 3.9 (A) Engage relevant professionals, students and their parents/carers in long-term transition planning for future environments.
- 3.10 (A) Design teaching and learning activities that promote generalisation of learning across time and across environments.

**Standard 4 – Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments**

- 4.1 (M) Implement, model and maintain positive interactions with students to encourage appropriate behaviour and to build students' social skills.
- 4.2 (M) Use a combination of routines, structured learning and monitoring to optimise student engagement.
- 4.3 (M) Use a range of preventive and positive intervention strategies including ecological and functional behaviour analysis to encourage socially-appropriate student behaviour.
- 4.4 (A) Maximise opportunities for students with additional needs to be meaningfully included in culturally appropriate ways with mainstream peers in learning and social activities.
- 4.5(O) Ensure students' well-being and safety within school by implementing school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.
- 4.6 (O) Incorporate strategies to promote the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.

**Standard 5 – Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning**

- 5.1 (M) Develop and implement accommodations or adjustments to assessment activities to allow meaningful evaluation of student learning.
- 5.2 (A) Assess and modify components of the classroom environment to support student engagement and achievement.

5.3 (A) Develop appropriate formats and criteria to record and evaluate students' progress on their individualised goals.

5.4 (M) Provide constructive and task specific feedback to students about their effort and performance relative to their individualised learning goals.

5.5 (M) Collaborate with colleagues to compile assessments that reflect learning across different contexts and subject areas.

5.6 (M) Use student assessment data and consultation with the student and their parent/carer to evaluate student achievement and modify teaching practice or learning goals.

5.7 (M) Using accurate and reliable records, report clearly and respectfully to students, parents/carers and learning support teams about individual student progress.

#### **Standard 6 – Engage in professional learning**

6.1 (O) Use the National Professional Standards for Teachers and advice from colleagues to identify and plan professional learning needs.

6.2 (M) Participate in learning to update knowledge of research-based practice related to the education of students with additional needs.

6.3 (M) Engage with colleagues and other professionals to improve knowledge and practice in general education pedagogy and disability-specific interventions.

6.4 (M) Apply knowledge and implement strategies acquired through professional learning programs and/or collaborative teams to address students' social and learning needs.

#### **Standard 7 – Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community**

7.1 (M) Promote recognition and acceptance within the school and community of the rights of people with a disability.

7.2 (M) Advocate to ensure schools comply with the legislative, administrative, organisational and professional requirements, related to the education of students with disability or additional needs.

7.3 (A) Identify the need for and facilitate the provision of specialised support or services for students with additional needs.

7.4 (M) Establish and maintain respectful collaborative relationships with parents/carers as valued partners when planning, implementing and evaluating programs

7.5 (A) Enable and build the capacity of parents/carers and colleagues

7.6 (O) Participate in professional and community networks and forums to broaden knowledge and improve practice.